

THE
Life and Death
 OF THE
B. VIRGIN:
 Giving an Account of the
MIRACLES
 Ascrib'd to Her by

Romish Writers,

WITH THE
 Grounds of the *Worship* paid to Her.

Mr By a Lay Hand. *Fleetwood*

Imprimatur.

H. MAURICE.

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ALL the Service that is paid to the Blessed Virgin, is founded (as they love to speak) upon the greatneses of *Mary*, *i. e.* upon the glorious Privileges she received from God in her *Conception, Birth, Life, Death, Resurrection*, and pretended *Assumption*. Of these her Greatneses we find no mention at all in Holy Scripture, and I am persuaded there is some mystery and secret reason of Divine Providence in the silence of the Evangelists, who tell us nothing of the Birth, the Life or death of the Mother of Jesus Christ, she appears but in four or five passages of the Gospel, from the birth of our Saviour; and even some of them are such, as make not much for her greatness.

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ness. Such, for example, is that which happened at the Marriage in *Cana of Galilee*, where undertaking to inform our Lord there was no more Wine left to entertain the Guests, she receiv'd an Answer, to our thinking, very hard : *Woman, what have I to do with thee ? mine hour is not yet come.* And like to this is that other passage of the Gospel, where she stood without with his Brethren, with purpose he should come and speak with her. But to those who brought the Message, he returned this Answer, *Why is my Mother, and who are my Brethren ?* and went not, that we know of. This does not very well agree with that profound Respect, and reverend manner of Deportment, with which (they say) he treats her now in Heaven. This silence of the *Evangelists*, proceeds, unquestionably, from the same reason, for which it pleased God to conceal the Body of *Moses* heretofore ; to wit, that the *Israelites* might not find it out, and make an Idol of it. So God was pleased the *Evangelists* should say no more of her, than was necessary to teach us the Mystery of the *Incarnation* ; that Men might not (with any shew of reason) Father on his word, those horrible Superstitions which he foresaw and knew *Papism* and false Devotion, would one day introduce into the World.

But the *Evangelists* have got nothing by this their Silence of the Birth, the Life and Death of *Mary*. We know them very well without their help. We have divined and discovered all. God knows how, indeed, but so it is, we have a compleat History of the whole. 'Tis true, it is so fabulous, and in some places so shameless, that even the Legends of *Latona*, Mother of *Apollo* and *Diana*, or of *Rhea*, called the Mother of the Gods, cannot possibly be more. In the design of making her a Goddess, and allotting her a Worship, very near to that
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we pay to Jesus Christ, there is nothing great and considerable in the Birth and Death of our Lord, the Son, that *Papism* has forgot to imitate and attribute to the Mother, excepting that they have not dared, as yet, to say, She was conceived of the Holy Ghost. Let us therefore see a short Abridgment of this Legend, which the *Greeks* (who were always notable Men at Invention) first began, and to which the *Latins* (scorning to stay behind) put the finishing hand.

First then, we have happily learn'd, (but you must not ask me how, or from whom,) that the Father of the Blessed Virgin's Name was *Joachim*, who was of the Royal Line, her Mothers, *Ann*. Which *Ann* had two Baronius in apparatu Anal. Sisters, the one called *Mary*, and the other *Soba*, all three Daughters of *Matan* the Priest; for it was necessary that the Royal and the Priestly Line should concenter and meet in her, who was to bring forth him, who is our Priest and King. From *Epiphanius's* time, *Joachim* Hæref. 78. 79. and *Ann*, have gone for the Father and Mother of the Blessed Virgin: But Revelation (like a Snow-ball) still goes on encreasing, and we have found, since *John Damascene's* time, who lived in the Eighth Century, that this *Joachim* was the Son of one *Barpanther*, who was the Son of *Panther*. J. Damascen. l. 14. de Orthod. fide. cap. 15. 'Tis true, these Names are not usually found among the *Jewish* Genealogies, nor are of *Hebrew* extract; but what was that to *John Damascene*, who neither understood a word of *Hebrew*, nor thought himself oblig'd to such exactness? We are also told, to Niceph. lib. 2. cap. 3. whom the Sisters of this *Ann* were married, and also what Children they had. *Mary*, the Eldest, was married in the Town of *Bethlehem*, and was the Mother of *Salome* the Midwife. *Soba*, that was the second Sister was the Mother of *Elizabeth* the Mother of *John Baptist*, and Cousin German to the Virgin *Mary*.

Ann, the Wife of *Joachim*, that was to be the Mother of the Mother of the Saviour of the World (the Mother, I say, of her that was to be called our Goddess, our Redeemers, our Comforters, (for strange things, you know, must have strange Names) our Advocate, our Refuge, the Salvation of Christians, the Perfection of the Divinity & Trinity) received all manner of Tokens of the future Greatness of the Child she was to bring into the World. She was Barren many years after her Marriage, & because they could not find in whom the fault lay, they were both of them cruelly ashamed; and the High Priest *Isachar* rejected the Offerings of *Joachim*, as of a dry and cursed Tree; saying to him with Indignation, *Cursed is every one that begetteth not a Male Child in Israel.* *Baronius* (that understood these things too well, not to know that no such Man as *Isachar* was at that time High Priest, and that they did not use to reject the Offerings of such Men as had barren Wives,) durst not adopt this passage of the story, although he does the rest. But till his time, none ever dar'd to call this History into question, but it went for certain an undoubted truth, upon the pretended Authority of *St. Jerome*. They add farthermore, that *Joachim*, covered with confusion for the affront the High Priest had offered him, resolved never to go home again; and that *Ann*, depriv'd of the comfort of her Husband, betook herself to her Prayers, that God would please to send him back, and to take away this her reproach. And hereupon it was, that *Bernardin de Busstis* made that pious and ingenious Application of the words of *Moses*, to *Joachim*, and *Ann*. *In the beginning God made Heaven and Earth*: By Heaven (says he) we must understand the Virgin *Mary*, the Lady of the World. And God said, *Let there be Light*: That is (says he) Let *Mary* be begotten, and be born. Poor *Joachim*,

Pseudo-Hieronymus ad Heliod. & Chronat.

Mariate Part 2. Ser. 3. Pelbart. de Temeswar. in Stellario l. 1. part. 1. c. 11.

Joachim, overwhelm'd with grief, went and hid himself in the Wilderness, where continuing forty days in Prayer and Fasting, an Angel at last appeared to him, and promis'd him the Birth of *Mary*, giving him this for a Token, that in going home, he should meet his Wife at a certain Gate of *Jerusalem*, called the Gilded Gate. *Ann* at the same time pouring forth her Prayers and Tears, was got into the Holy of Holies, to get as near as she could to the Throne of God. Indeed, no Woman yet had enter'd into that Sacred Place, and even among Men, it was the privilege of the High Priest alone to do it, and that but once a Year, on the great Feast of *Propitiations*. But what might not shee do, who was to be the Mother of the Virgin? And who should have dar'd to shut the door against her? Hither then the Angel came, and declar'd to her the Birth of *Mary*, and order'd her to go and meet her Husband in such a place: It was the Angel *Gabriel* that perform'd this Office, as *Bernardin de Bustis*, and *Batholomew of Pisa*, Authors of sovereign and unquestionable Authority, both assure us: Who add moreover, That he received this Commission of God with Joy incredible; and that returning into Heaven, the whole Quire of Angels set themselves to Dance and Sing for Joy, having learned of him the approaching Birth of *Mary*, who was to be their Queen.

Hitherto the Virgin, and our Lord, are on the square, each of their Births annunciated by an Angel. Her Conception, in the next place, was alike Miraculous; for, (besides that *Joachim* and *Ann*, were both of them past the age of having Children) it was *Immaculate*, i. e. *Mary* also, as well as *Jesus*, was Conceived without Original Sin. The Church knew nothing of this Mystery, for Eleven or Twelve hundred Years, when certain lazy Canons of *Lyons* set themselves to invent
this

Ep. 174. ad
Can. Lugd.

In Eq. ad Ro-
man. cap. 5.
Disput. 51.

this Fancy, whom St. Bernard labour'd to Confound, but without any great success. The devotion to the Virgin daily increasing, it was found very convenient She should be exempted from the Law, common to all the Children of Adam. 'Tis true indeed, that all the Fathers, St. Augustine, Ambrose, Chrysostome, Remigius, and the rest, were of another opinion, as Melchior Canus, the Learned Bishop of the Canaries, proves, from their Citations: But we are to appeal, it seems, from them, as incompetent Judges in this Case, though their Authority be very good in any other. The Jesuite Salmeron, does all he can, to Invalidate their Testimony and Authority. He says, That Proofs drawn from Authority, are not altogether sure: That the greatest part of Fathers, cited against the Immaculate Conception, deserve not to be heard; and that, at last however, God had not revealed all things to all Men: That the Fathers were Ignorant of this great truth, the revelation of which was reserved for these latter Ages of the World.

This is no place to give you an account of the terrible Bickerings there have been, upon this score, for many Ages, and even in this of ours, between the Jacobins, and Cordeliers, i. e. Dominicans, and Franciscans. The former maintaining, with Thomas Aquinas, that the Virgin was conceived in Original Sin: The latter, with Scotus, that She was conceived without. And although the Popes have never formally and in express words, decreed it to be an Article of Faith, yet they have defined it as a Truth, which no Man can oppose without great Rashness. And it has been forbid to the Dominicans, to Preach, deliver their Opinion, or Teach in publick or private, directly or indirectly, any thing against the Immaculate Conception of the

the Virgin, since which the worship of Her has exceedingly increased; every Body almost hath chosen Her for their Patroness, and whole Kingdoms have put themselves into *Her Protection*.

Nor is this a place to refute this Extravagance in, although it very well deserves to be refuted, since it smells strongly of Profaneness, in that it deprives our Saviour of the Honour and Advantage of having been the only *One* that was Conceived without Sin; and of being the Redeemer of the World without Exception. For if the Blessed Virgin was without both Actual, and Original Sin, I do not see how She stood in need of either Remission, or Redemption, and She contributed nothing to Her self, or to Her own Salvation, by bringing Jesus Christ into the World.

We must not here forget, that *Papism*, agreeable to the spirit of Error by which it stands, has not failed to heap Fable upon Fable, and to establish this Immaculate Conception, by many a lying Miracle, and many a false Vision. Saint *Briget* has defin'd this Controversie many a time and oft, and the Virgin Mother has revealed it to her frequently, that She was Conceived without Original Sin, and many Miracles have been wrought to that purpose. But that which is as pretty, is, that the *Dominicans* have also had their Saint and Prophetess, to maintain She was conceived in Original Sin, and that was *Catharine of Siena*, whose Revelation is upheld by Cardinal *Cajetan*, as much more Creditable than that of *Briget*; for that *Catharine* had been Canonized in due and formal manner, when there was a lawful Pope, and so acknowledged over all the World, whereas *Briget* was Canoniz'd by *Benet* the IX. in a time of Schism, when no body knew who was the true Pope, or whether there was any such at all.

5 Book. Rev.
the 13. and
Book 6. cap.
49.
Tom. 2. O-
pusc. Tract.
31. c. 5.

Pius the II.

The

1507.

The *Dominicans* not contented with St. *Catharine's* Revelation, would also have some Miracles to establish their Opinion on; and I believe there are few in the World, that have not heard of the famous History of the *Dominicans* of *Bearn*, (and here in *England*, by the name of the History of *Jesfer*) who took upon them to prove by Miracles, the Conception of the Virgin, to have been in Sin, against the *Cordeliers*. Four of these Men, undertook to deceive and cheat a wretched simple Novice of their Convent; and one of them appeared to him like a Spirit, telling him, that the Order of *Dominicans* was most unjustly hated, because it taught after St. *Thomas*, that the Virgin *Mary* was Conceived in Original Sin: but that their Enemies the *Franciscans*, were sufficiently tormented in Purgatory, and especially among the rest, *Alexander* of *Hales*, and *John Duns Scotus*, for teaching the contrary: The Virgin *Mary* her self in like manner appeared to him, (that is to say, a Fryar in her Habit) and Imprinted on his Right Hand (by way of Vision) one of the Wounds of our Lord, her Son, which the Monk (without a Vision) did really and indeed feel, to his very great pain; and very well he might, for the Virgin-Monk had pierced his Hand through with a great Nail. But in wounding him She gave him some Lint, and Rags made of our Saviours Swaddling-bands whilst they abode in *Egypt*, and assured him from her own self, that She was Born in Original Sin. But the Monks, not satisfied with this, gave to our young Novice, (who was indeed a very stupid Block-head) a mighty strong sleeping Potion, which deprived him of all manner of Sense, and Understanding, and in this Fit, imprinted other four Wounds upon his Feet, his Hand and Side, with *Aqua Fortis*, to imitate the Wounds of our Saviour, and the Marks of St.

St. *Francis*. Being come to himself, they made him believe, he had been in an Extasie, during which the Blessed Spirit had imprinted on him these four new Wounds. They gave him also very frequently strange Drinks to make him Foam, and struggle against Death, as Jesus Christ had done before him. Hitherto the poor Wretch had never doubted of the truth of all this, but believed in good earnest, that he had had true Visions from Heaven, and Apparitions of the Virgin. But now at last, began to suspect there must be some Enchantments, Witchcraft, and Illusion in the case; and therefore (after he had been thus Martyr'd several Months) makes his escape from the Convent, to the Magistrates, where he discovered all the Mystery. *Langius* a Monk, in his Chronicle, in the Year 1509. adds, That they made an Image of the Virgin, and fill'd the Head of it with some red Liquor, which distilling from the Eyes, She was reputed thereby to weep Blood. They coloured also an Host with Vermilion, and Flesh-colour, as though it had been turned into Flesh; and all this to persuade the World, their Doctrine of the Conception, was true. Four of the *Dominicans* were hereupon seized, *Francis Vulchi*, that counterfeited the Spirit; *Stephen Boltzhorst* Preacher, whose Office was to vent these Visions in the Pulpit, with *J. Vetter*, Prior of the House, and *H. Stenicker*, Receiver; who were all Burnt over against the Convent, in the Year aforesaid. This Story did not serve a little, towards the disabusing of the *Switzers*, some time after, when they reform'd themselves, in matters of Religion.

The Monks, to whom Heaven, in these latter days, revealed the notable Circumstance of the Immaculate Conception, have also, by the same Spirit of Revelation, learnt the very day when it was. It was on the

Her Birth.

Lib. 2. c. 2.
ex Enodo
Antiochedo.

L. 4. c. 5. de
Orth. [side &
Orat. 1. de
Nat. Virg.

Pelbarti Stel-
larium lib. 5.
part. 1. art. 3.

eighth of *December*, and She was brought forth the eighth of *September* following; this we know, because we know what Age the Virgin was of when She lay Inn of our Saviour: And knowing precisely the Year of our Lord, we know also the Year of his Mothers Birth. Not that the Gospel says a letter of her Age, but that's all one. We have found it in *Nicephorus Callistus*, an Author that may compare with any Legendary in the World, and who, by consequence, shall have as much Credit as a true Evangelist. We have found, I say, in this Historian, that the Virgin was just Fifteen, when She brought forth Jesus Christ. She was Born at *Jerusalem*, in *Joachims* own House, that stood pretty near to the Pool of *Bethesda*, of which *St. John*, in the 5th. of his Gospel makes mention. For so says our old Friend, *J. Damascen*, who was Sainted for having been a Martyr for the Worship of the Virgins Images. Others (and *Tostatus* for one, on *Mat. 2.*) say, She was Born at *Nazareth*, or *Seppharo*, Three Leagues from thence; but where ever it was, it is certain, that the whole Universe was moved at it: The Angels (as they did some time after for the Son) Descended in Troops from Heaven, chanting out Hymns, and most Melodious Songs, in honour of the Spouse of their Eternal King. The little holy Maid her self, (having the use of her Reason as soon as She was Born) found also mighty Consolation, and exceeding great Pleasure in it. And, which is a greater Wonder yet, this Heavenly Melody is every Year repeated, on the same day. And by this Musick, the day of her Birth, which had long been undiscovered, came to be revealed, to a very Contemplative Saint, who had heard this Musick every 8th. of *September*, and wondered what the matter was; (as a Wiser Man than he, might very well

well do) and therefore on a time, in one of his Rapture Fits, begged of God, that he would reveal this matter to him ; and was answered, that on this day, the Glorious Virgin was Born ; and thus has the Mother gotten the start of her Son. She was even with him, in having Armies of Cœlestial Spirits to celebrate the day of her Birth ; but this yearly Repetition of the Angels Harmony, has given Her the advantage : For I don't know any Book that says, they do as much for *Jesus Christ*.

It may be, some Devoto of the Virgin, jealous of the glory of his Queen, may find something less in the Birth of *Mary*, than in that of *Jesus Christ*, because he hears of no new Star, that accompanied her Birth, as one did his. But this only serves to betray his want of reading ; for had he seen but one *Theophilus*, a certain Historian (of whose Age and Authority, it would be to no purpose to inquire, for no body can give you an account, but however of very good Credit in this Case) ; he could have told him, that on the Birth-day of the Virgin, the Light of the Sun was doubled ; that the Moon received such an augmentation of Light, that she seem'd almost to equalize the Sun, so that the little Cloud that is wont to obscure her, disappeared on the night of this Nativity ; and round her Globe shone (as it were) a great Star, of an extraordinary Fire, and Lustre.

I think, this was another kind of Star, than that which appeared to the Wise Men in the *East*, which seemed to be but a pittiful flying Meteor in the Air, in comparifon with this. An Angel gave the Name of *Jesus* before the Child was born, and an Angel did as much for Her, and the name of *Mary* was of Heavens choyce ; and it was also Mystical as well as that of

Tome 3.
Tract. 4.

Jesus, for *Mary*, or *Miriam*, in the *Hebrew*, signifies the *Star of the Sea*. Not that any *Jew*, or *Rabbi*, how profound soever, ever understood this *Etymology*; but that it was revealed to our *Legendaries* so to signify; that by virtue of it, she might succeed to *Venus*, who was the *Morning Star* before, and *President of the Sea*, having a kind of right thereto, by Her extraction from the *Froth* of it: For, as *Salmeron* the *Jesuite* says, as the *Star* that is called *Hesperus*, and *Lucifer*, directs and conducts the *Sailers* to the *Port*, so the *Mother of Messiah* succours us in all our *Dangers*, that we may arrive at the *Port of the Grace of God*, and *Life Eternal*. Common *Seamen* have another kind of opinion of her *Power*, in respect of *Ports and Havens*, in this *World* too.

Niceph. l. 1.
cap. 7.
Damaſc. ubi
supra.
Cermanes
Const. in En-
comio B. Vir-
ginis.

After the *Birth*, next comes her *Education* in her tenderest years, the *Scriptures* say nothing of this neither, but we have lost nothing by that, for we learn elsewhere. That *Ann*, to obtain her of *God*, had, as *Hannah* heretofore had done for *Samuel*, vowed her to his *Service*: And that when she was weaned and three *Years* old, she was presented to the *High Priest*, who received her as a precious *Jewel*, and Lodged her in the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, where before stood the *Ark of the Covenant*, and where he himself alone had right to enter, once a *Year*. *Zachary*, the *Father of St. John Baptist*, was (it seems) *High Priest*, and made no such unnecessary *Scruple* as these, How should I introduce a little *Girl*, into a place where I my self can enter in but once a year? How can I, in the most sacred and august *Partition of the Temple*, bring in a *Bed*, a *Nurse*, and little *Child*, with all that's necessary in such a case? And what shall become of all the *Impurities* inseparable from the *Infant Age*? But being a
Pro-

Prophet, and knowing the Mystery of all, he received her without any sticking. Thither she was brought accompanied with troops of Virgins with flaming Torches in their hands, and there was brought up for eleven years, the Angels all the while supplying her with nourishment. After eleven years, the Priests assembled to consult what they should do with this divine Virgin, and at last concluded, to commit her to the Guardianship of St. *Joseph*, of whose vertue and continence they were very well assured. 11 and 3 make 14, and at 14 she was affianc'd to *Joseph*; 3 months after, the Angel came with the Salutation, she conceived of the Holy Ghost, and was brought to bed at 15.

An unbelieving *Jew*, would make a great many odd exceptions to this History, he would say it was a thing unheard of in the Mystery of Religion, to introduce, to feed and bring up a Girl in the *Holy of Holies*, where ordinary Priests themselves durst never enter. He would tell us that Women, were they never so pure, were never admitted into the Temple beyond the place called the Womens Court. He would say, it was very strange the *Rabbins* and ancient Doctors should mention no such thing as this, either to recount or refuse it. He would add moreover, that in the Catalogue of High Priests, he could find no such Man as *Zachary*, the Father of *John Baptist*. Indeed, these difficulties have put our Catholic Doctors to no small trouble; and now they rather chuse to say, that round the Sanctuary there were little Chambers, where Recluses and Religious Maids were bred up, and worked for the Temple, to whose care the Education of little *Mary* was intrusted: But our old devout Gentlemen heretofore, never concerned themselves with any Scruples or Objections of Unbelievers, but in great simplicity swallowed all for truth, upon the word

Cofterus Medit. 3. de præsent. Virg.

In Natalib.
Chr.tom. 3.

word and authority of Saints, such as *J. Damascen* Canonized, and consequently made Infallible, at least by the tacit consent of the Church. And who can forbear believing a History that has gotten some twelve hundred years upon his head? For *Gregory Nyssen* reports this: And though he reports it only as an *Apocryphal* History, yet the Church has since made it as good as *Canonical*, by an universal Belief of it.

Tome 3.
tract. 9.

The Blessed Virgin consented to live with *Joseph*, in shew of Marriage, but in effect, in pure Virginity, for she told him secretly, that she had made a Vow of Chastity, and withal advis'd him to do so too. But notwithstanding her Vow, which seem'd to determine her never to become a Mother, she quickly after became so, by the operation of the Holy Ghost. And here, the Doctors are in great trouble to know, of what it was, that the Virgin conceived, and formed the Saviour of the World. Some believe the Holy Ghost took three drops of her Heart-blood, and disposed them in their place, to make the Body of our Lord. *Salmeron*, though he reject this Opinion, yet allows it to be a devout religious Contemplation. But he himself is of another mind, which I cannot give you in his terms, no more than I can the Opinions of other Authors upon this Occasion, because they search into the Mysteries of Generation so profoundly and exactly, and examin them in such a gross and naked manner, that even the chastest and most delicate Translation of their *Latin* into *English*, would not fail to wound (or at least disorder) our Imagination. It would be worse yet, if I should recite any thing out of a Book, that was current in the last Age, (and it may be, is in being now) intituled *Proto Evangelium, sive de Natalibus Christi, & ipsius Matris V. Mariæ*, and Eathered on *St. James*. Here we may find enough to make the most

most shameless Prostitutes to blush; upon occasion of one *Salome* a Midwife, who would not believe a Virgin had brought forth, but would needs be as curious in her way, as *St. Thomas*, doubting of the Resurrection, was afterwards, in his. One *William Postell*, in the preceeding Age, made the discovery of this Horrible Gospel, God knows whence. But is it not a pretty ready way, to bring the True and Sacred Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ into contempt?

I will pass over all the impertinent tales with which they charge the Life of the Blessed Virgin. The care she took to keep the Fore-skin of our Lord, at his Circumcision. The pains she was at to gather all the Blood and Water that fell from his hands, and feet, and side, upon the Cross; and in particular, the care she had to keep the Nails that fastened him thereto. I will pass over all this (I say) and a hundred such like things, to come to the last and greatest action of all, her *Assumption* into Heaven, because it is one of the principal Stories on which the Worship of the Blessed Virgin is establish'd. Thus then the Gentlemen report the matter.

The Blessed Virgin lived upon the Earth after her Son, till she was Fifty Eight years old, as some say; Sixty Three, as others; and others, more by a great deal. At last she Prayed very earnestly to her Son, that she might depart from this place of Pilgrimage on Earth, and be gathered unto him; who thereupon sent an Angel to her, promising that within three days he would take her to himself. Together with this News, the Angel delivered her a branch of Palm that he brought from Paradise, and told her, she must have it carried before her Bier to her Interment; he gave her also a Suit of Mourning which her Son had sent her. Of this Angel she demanded two things; first, that she might be buried by all

Pelbart, who lived in the Year 1471. and dedicated his Book to Pope Sixt. IV.

all the Apostles. Secondly, that when her Soul departed from her Body, it might meet with none of the Devils, or Malign Spirits. Upon which last demand, the Angel said unto her, *Madam, why are you afraid to meet the Devil, whose Head it is that you have bruised? However what you ask, you shall have: You shall meet with no Devils, and the Noble Apostles shall Inter you.* Upon this the Angel re-ascended into Heaven, environ'd with a great Light. And suddenly the branch of Palm that he had brought, and left in the Virgins hand, became exceeding bright, of a lively shining Green, and every leaf thereof as glorious as the Morning Star.

To free you from all manner of doubt in this matter, *St. Cosmus Vestitor* (from whom honest *Pelbert* says he took this History,) tells us, he saw himself a little piece of this Branch, which retained to his days, a lustre, equal to a very bright Star.

The Virgin, full of Joy at this good news, assembled all the Virgins and Saints together, and gave them to understand her Death was now at hand, comforting them thereupon. At the same time was *St. John* the Apostle Preaching at *Ephesus*, and in the middle of his Sermon, comes me a clap of Thunder, and a white Cloud, that whisk'd him through the Air, and set him down at the Door of the Virgin *Maries* House; where being enter'd, he and the Virgin embrac'd each other, with abundance of Tears, and *Mary* recommended to his care, her Burial. At which words, the good Apostle threw himself down upon the Earth, and with a great deal of passion cry'd out and said, *Alas! My God, My God, Why dost thou lay this sore affliction upon us, to take away this Holy Mistress of our Religion, the Mirror of Sanctity, and our only Consolation?* As he was thus lamenting, the Blessed Virgin shew'd him the shining Palm, and the Mourning

Mourning Suit her Son had sent her, and order'd him to take great care this Branch were carried before her Bier. St. *John* desir'd with all his heart, that all the Apostles might accompany him at this Solemn Action, and immediately the Apostles, that were scattered in all the corners of the Earth; were carried through the Air on white Clouds, and set down before the House, where entering in, and meeting with St. *John*, they were marvellously astonished, but after Salutations, he explained the whole Mystery to them, upon hearing of which, they were overwhelmed with grief, and entering into *Maries* room, adored her, in the Angels Salutation, saying *Ave Maria, gratia plena, &c.* to whom the Virgin replied saying, *God preserve you, the chosen Disciples of my only Son.* After a great deal of homage & adoration paid unto her by the Apostles, she received the Communion, recommended her Spirit to her Son, kneeled down upon the ground, lift up her Soul to God, and disposed herself to give up the ghost. About the third hour of the Night, Jesus himself, with the nine Orders of Angels, the Assembly of Patriarchs, Prophets, Martyrs, Confessors and Virgins, came down from Heaven, and stood about her Bed, the whole Cœlestial Army singing Songs and admirable Hymns to the honour of *Mary*, Jesus himself beginning, and saying, *Come my chosen, come, and I will place Thee on my Throne.* To whom the Virgin answered, *Lo, I come, as it is written in the Volume of the Book, that I should do thy will, O my God;* and the reupon render'd up her Soul into the hands of her Son, who bore it away with him to Heaven. When the Soul was gone, the Body made shift of itself to say, *I give thee thanks, O Lord, for that I am thy glory; remember Me, because I am the work of thy hands, and have kept what you committed to my charge;* upon which the Body became

came so luminous, that the Maids who were preparing it for Burial, and could touch it very well before, could not so much as look upon it. Now when all things were ready, and the body to be taken up, the Apostles made abundance of Complements and Ceremonies, offering the Places of Honour to one another round, with great civility; but at last it was agreed, that *Peter* and *Paul* should carry the Corps, *John* should go before with the Palm, and the rest of the Apostles should follow in couples. As they were going forward, Jesus Christ march'd over them, with all his Angels, covered in a Cloud, and joyning Voices with the College of Apostles, they made an admirable Comfort; and at the same time, a most sweet and fragrant Odour was spread through all the Region of the Air, on all hands.

The *Jews* at this sight, being fill'd with rage and malice, thought this a very fair opportunity to rid their hands at once, of all the Apostles of Jesus Christ, there met together; and gathering together, the High Priest himself advances first, and most profanely lays his two hands upon the Bier, to stop them; when lo! immediately they both withered, and were torn off at the elbows, and there hung on each side of the Corps, whilst the rest that followed him, were struck with blindness. The miserable High Priest made a lamentable howling for the loss of his hands, and for extreme anguish that he felt. But *Peter* told him honestly, there was no way to save himself, but by kissing the Bier where the Body of *Mary* lay, and making Profession of the Christian Faith, which he quickly did, and both his hands were immediately fastened on again. A little after, *Peter* gave him one of the Dates that grew on the Branch of Palm, to rubb his Followers eyes with, who thereupon recovered their sight. And now, without any further molestation,

lestation, they were come to the Vale of *Jehosophat*, where they found a Sepulchre hewn out of a Rock, and altogether like that of Jesus Christ ; there they laid the Body of the Virgin, and continued three days in their Devotions at her Tomb. At the end of which, a bright Cloud shone all about the Sepulchre, the Voices of Angels echoed out from every quarter, a sweet smelling Savour was spread throughout the Air, and all the World was seiz'd with ravishing astonishment. *Jesus* descended with his Angels, and having saluted his Apostles, said unto them, *What Glory, and what Honour, think you, ought I to bestow upon my Mother ?* To which, with one consent, they answered, *It seemeth just unto thy Servants, O Lord, that as Thou hast vanquished Death, and reignest from Generation to Generation, so also Thou shouldst raise the Body of thy Mother, and set her at thy right hand for evermore.* The Soul of *Mary* presently appeared, and our Lord said to it, *Arise my well beloved, the Tabernacle of Glory, thou art fair, my dear beloved, and there is no blemish in thee ; as thou hast no spot, so shall thy Body never see corruption.*

And thus were things carried, according to the report of *Pelbart of Temeswar*, a grave Author, whom *Father Crasset*, a Jesuit, hath very lately cited abundance of times, (in his Book of *True Devotion to the Virgin*, Printed in 1679.) as worthy thoroughly to be believed ; and *Pelbart* himself tells us, he had them from the Writings of *St. Cosmus Vestitor*. Others report these matters a little otherwise, in the business of the Virgins Tomb, which (they say) stood open three days, by reason *St. Thomas* was absent, who earnestly desir'd (it would not be very fair to ask of whom he desir'd this, or how he came to know she was dead, but desire he did,) the Consolation of seeing the Body of *Mary*, which yet was not granted

him, for he came, and found the Sepulchre was empty, and in the midst of it, a Spring of *Manna* boyling up.

O God ! what face is this, to forge so silly a Romance, for which there is not in good History, the least foundation ? For in a word, in all this Rapsody, there's not a syllable of Truth : And yet this is the bottom of the Worship and Adoration paid to the Bleis'd Virgin, and of the Feast of her *Assumption*.

'Tis not my business to confute this Story of the *Assumption*, here ; let it suffice, at present, that I advertise you, it was unknown to all the Ancients for the first four Centuries. That passage in the Chronicle of *Eusebius*, is acknowledg'd by Men of Understanding, to be false and spurious ; as likewise are the Pieces attributed to St. *Austin* and St. *Jerom* ; together with the false *Dionysius*, who wrote between Four and Five Hundred, at the soonest. In a word, the Men of sense and honesty, even among the *Romanists*, do at this day look upon the *Assumption*, as an idle business, but I must not tell the People so. The Church of *Paris* seems to have declar'd openly against it ; for by an Ordinance of the Cathedral Chapter of *Nostre Dame*, the First of *August* 1668, it was decreed, that such a certain long Sermon, or Homily, that had been read in the Quire the first Canonical hour, for many years last past, on the Fifteenth of *August*, the Feast of the *Assumption*, every year, should be read no more. (This Sermon, you must know, established the *Assumption* both of Body and Soul, and was added by I can't tell who, from the Year 1549. or 1550.) and that henceforwards should be read, what was usually read out of the Martyrology, taken from *Uswardus*.

Now

Now the passage in *Ufwardus*, which the Chapter and Bishop of *Paris*, ordered to be restored to its place, has these words: *The Sleep or Death of Mary, the holy Mother of God*. "Although her Sacred Body is not found on Earth, yet the Church, who is a pious Mother, celebrates her blessed Memory, not doubting in the least, but that She died according to the condition of all Mankind. But the Church being deliberate in her Judgments, hath rather chosen to own she knows not where this Sacred Temple of the Holy Ghost is hidden by the Providence of God, than teach any thing herein either Vain or Apocryphal. These were the words, that were taken from the Service of the Feast of the Assumption, to thrust in a certain Sermon that taught just contrary; saying, the Church look'd upon the Assumption of the Blessed Virgins body and soul into Heaven, as a thing very sure and certain. *Claudius Joly*, Canon of the Church, and one of the Commissaries, deputed to Examine this Affair, hath made a Dissertation thereupon. And the Learned *Mon-sieur de Launoy*, has given his Judgment on the same Subject, in whose works one may find enough to confound this Story of the *Assumption*, and answer *Baronius* and the rest, who look upon it as a point of Faith, or at least a Sacred History, that no body must touch, or offer once to disbelieve.

Who lived in the 9th. Cent.

C. Joly de
verbis Ufuar
di dissertatio
J. Launoi
de controver-
fia super ex-
cibendo
Martyrolo-
gio.

What we have hitherto seen of the History of the Blessed Virgin, and on which the Worship that is paid to Her is founded, is but a little part of the Chronicle of the Mother of God. She has done more Miracles since her Death, than Jesus Christ and all his Apostles did in all their Lives, in all the World; and we have huge great Volumes of them, some of which I cannot forbear giving you for a taste, because the Worship of the

the Blessed Virgin is exceedingly Built, and Established on them, and because they are at this day thought the efficacious and powerful Arguments to defend their Superstition. And *F. Crasset*, a Jesuit of repute, thought so to be sure, when in Answer to the Author of *Sober advice to the Indiscreet Devotos of the Virgin* — He makes this Use of them.

In the number of these Fables, I put the establishment of Places of Devotion, where the Virgin is particularly Worshipped, where She works great Miracles, and whither Her Devotos go on Pilgrimage; the reputation I say of these Places, and their Holiness, is founded on such Fables, as I verily believe Pagans would blush to own. Such, for Example, is that on which is founded the famous Worship of our Lady of *Mount Serrat*. We are told, the first Count of *Barcelona* had an exceeding handsome Daughter, but possessed with a Devil, whom the Count one day carried to a holy Man in the Neighbourhood, call'd Frier *John Guerin*, to the end he should exorcise the Devil, and deliver his Daughter: He did so, and for fear the Devil should return again into her, he advised the Count to leave her there some little time in his keeping; to which the Count consented, and accordingly left her. Frier *John* being alone with this handsome young Lady, (and not being able to quell his own Devil) became enamoured of her; and in short, Ravish'd her first, and afterwards Kill'd her, at the instigation of a Devil disguised like a Hermite. After this, being guilty of these detestable Crimes, away he goes to *Rome*, there confesses himself to the Pope, who ordered him for Penance, to return to *Mount Serrat* upon all four, like a Beast as he was; and not to speak a word, nor offer to get up upon his Legs, till a Child about three Months old should bid

bid him rise, and tell him God had pardoned his offence. Seven years after this, the Count of *Barcelona* was a Hunting, when some of his Men found out this Frier in a Den, all over hairy like a Bear, whom they took and Chained, and brought away with them to the Castle of *Barcelona*, where he was tied up in a Stable like a Monster. The Count a little after made a great Feast, and to divert his Company, ordered the Monster to be brought forth; whom as soon as the Earl's Child saw, that was there in its Nurses Arms, it said distinctly these words: *Rise up upon thy Feet, Frier John Guerin, for God hath pardoned thy Offence.* And immediately the Frier came to himself, began to speak, and tell the whole Story. Upon which the Count told him, that since God had pardoned him, he could do no less. But however, he desired to know where he had buried his Daughter, that he might take up her Bones, and bury them in his Fathers Sepulchre. The good Frier conducted the Count's Servants to the place where he had Interr'd the Lady, and opening the Ground, they found her (Would you think it?) alive and well, as fresh, and as handsome as ever, excepting a little kind of streak like a Scarlet Thread, about her Neck, in the place where he had cut. The Maid spoke, and told them she owed her Life to the Blessed Virgin, to whom she had been Consecrated, and who preserved her (and indeed it was so) Miraculously. There they built a Convent, of which this young Lady was the *Abbess*, and Frier *J. Guerin*, the Confessor: Near to this place, in a certain Grotto, was found an Image of the Blessed Virgin, exceeding bright and luminous, and perfumed with excellent Sweets, which was discovered by Angels Melody, that were worshipping it in the Cave; this Image, they that found it, were

Ferreolus
Locrius lib. 4.
c. 25. Maria
Augusta.

were for carrying away, but when they came as far as the place where the Lady had been buried, it grew so heavy on their Hands, that they were glad to leave it there with all their Hearts. There they built a Chappel over it, although it was a very desert place, and mighty inconvenient for the Pilgrims resorting thither; and this is the rise of that famous Chappel, where so many Miracles and famous Things have been done.

The Devotion of our Lady of *Liesse*, is founded on a Tale, no less ridiculous than the former, though it be something less horrible. We are told, that a certain Princess, Daughter to the *Soldan* of *Egypt*, in the time of the Holy Wars, (the Original of all Romances) came to visit three Gentlemen of *Picardy*, that were Prisoners at *Grand Cairo*, and demanded of them the Picture of the Blessed Virgin. Not a Man of them understood a bit of Painting, but however one of them promised her Highness what she required; but being put very hard to fulfil it, the Virgin delivered them from their Concern, by giving them her Picture from Heaven herself. The Princess upon this, found means to break their Prison, and escape with them, and passing an arm of the Sea, they laid them down to sleep in a Wood, and waking in the Morning, found themselves in *Picardy* by a Fountain, where they built the Church of our Lady of *Liesse*.

But of this kind, there is nothing in the World more Renowned, and at the same time more Absurd, than the History of the famous Chamber of our Lady of *Loretto*. This is the very Chamber of the House of *Joachim* and *Ann*, in the City of *Nazareth* in *Galilee*, in which the Virgin *Mary* was Born. (Our Legendaries should consult with one another, sometimes, for before we heard She was Born in *Jerusalem*, with a great deal
of

of Punctuality.) In this Chamber She received the Salutation of the Angel, in this Conceived the Saviour of the World, and in this bred Him up till He was Twelve Years of Age. The Apostles, after the Death of Jesus Christ, observing carefully what a world of Miracles were wrought in this Chamber, judged it very convenient to build a Chappel there, and Celebrate the Mysteries in it, that is to say, to sing Mass in it; and Saint *Luke* the Evangelist, who was as good a Painter as Physician, drew with his own hand the Picture of the Virgin, which is there to be seen to this day. This Chappel was frequented with a great deal of Devotion, whilst the Christians staid in *Galilee*, and especially in the time of the *Croisades*, or holy Wars, but the Christians being chased away, and the Devotion at this Chamber beginning to cool apace, the Angels took it on the 9th of May, in the year, 1291. (says *Turfelin*, very exactly) and brought it through the Air into *Dalmatia*, distant from *Galilee* about Six thousand Miles; as those who have cast it up tell us, upon whom let it rest. There the Angels set the Chamber or Chappel down upon a Hill, in view of the *Adriatick* Sea, between two Towns, the one called *Tersactum*, and the other *Flumen*. At the first, there was a mighty concourse of devout People, that came upon the fame of this great Miracle, but their Zeal continued not; and the Virgin not finding there, the honour she expected, ordered the Angels a second time to take the Room, and passing the *Adriatick* Sea, to Transport it into *Italy*, and set it down in the Territory of *Recanati*, in the midst of a Wood, belonging to a certain Lady (for without a Woman in the case, there can be no great Miracle) called *Loretta*, that owed the Diocels, or Territory of *Recanati*; which accordingly they did.

This new Miracle of the second Transportation of the Chamber, rekindled Mens devotion for the Virgin, and there was old flocking to it from all Quarters, but the Situation of the Chappel was an occasion of a great many Robberies and Villanies committed on the poor Pilgrims, by reason that the Woods afforded shelter to the Rogues, who upon all occasions Sallied out upon them, and retir'd into the same securely. The Angels therefore thought it fit, it should be taken from amidst this Wood, and removed a little farther, to a Mountain that belonged to two Brothers; which Brothers in a short time, made a very profitable business of it, by the great resort of Pilgrims, and the rich Presents that were made, but not being able to agree in the division of the Spoil, the Virgin was very angry, and thought they were unworthy of the honour She had done them, and therefore ordered the Angels to transfer it to another place; up then they took it the fourth time, and set it in the High-way, where now it stands and works such Miracles. The People of *Recanati* came to see this Miraculous Room, and finding it set upon the Ground without any manner of Foundation, were greatly afraid it would fall down, and therefore built about it a huge and mighty thick Wall, which stands at this present to be seen. But no body could tell from whence this House came, till a long time after, when the Blessed Virgin appeared in a Dream to a certain Man, an intimate Friend and Servant of Hers, and revealed the whole matter to him, as I have been relating it. This Man declared the same to a certain Wife and understanding Person of that Country, who thought it convenient, to depute sixteen Grave and Creditable Men, to go to *Nazareth* in *Galilee*, and take Cognizance of the matter of Fact. Away they went, taking

taking the Measure of the House at *Loretto* with them, and came safe to *Nazareth*, where they found an empty space, where the Virgins House had stood, and nothing left but the Foundations, of which these Sixteen took the Length and Breadth, and finding them to agree most exactly with the Dimensions of *Loretto House*, they were sufficiently convinced; but besides, they found an Inscription on the Wall hard by, attesting that such a Church had stood there heretofore, and was miraculously carried away. And thus this truth was laid open as manifest as the Light, by the Testimony of almost a Jury and half of able Ambassadors, and this we find written in the Registers of that House, and hung up in a Table in the Chappel, to be seen by all Comers. This is in effect, an *Epitome* of *Turfellin's* great History of this House, who amplifies the Matter very curiously. This Jesuit's Book was Printed with Privilege from Pope *Clement* the VIII, with the general Approbation of the greatest Doctors at *Rome*, such as *Raynaud*, *Bzovius*, *Spondanus*, and others, who refer us to this Book as a Piece, that is able to ease us of all manner of Doubts, that may rise on this occasion.

Turfellin's
Historiæ
Laurentianæ,
lib. 1.

And will the time then never come, when Men will reassume that Shame they have so long renounc'd? How is it possible they can in Earnest, propagate such Impertinences as this? *Cui bono*, To what end and purpose is it, that a House must jump from place to place thus through the Air? Who does not see that this is an Invention of one who is not the Father of Truth, to uphold those lamentable Superstitions, of which that Blessed Maid is made the Object?

It may be convenient here to observe, that this pretended Transportation is said to have been made, at the

end of the Thirteenth Century, when the *Saracens* had entirely chased the *Christians* out of *Palestin*: And yet *St. Antonine*, A. B. of *Florence*, one of the hardiest Relators, and greatest Admirers of Fabulous Miracles, and strange things, that perhaps the World ever had, says not one word of this Matter; and yet he should have known, being an *Italian*, and living within 150. years of the time assigned for this great Wonder, and one that would have believed it, if he had but once heard on't. Another Saint also of the same Order, (a *Dominican*) and same Country, to wit, *Vincent Ferrier*, that lived according to *Bellarmin's* Account, 1410. or as others say, in 1440. in a Sermon (amongst his Works) on the Feast of the *Assumption*, says expressly, that our Ladies Chamber is still at *Nazareth*, and yet according to the History, it had been then in *Italy*, above 100. years; And was it not possible that great Saint should not know as much? But thus it is, The Fable was at first invented without any Conscience, without any Shame, or indeed, without any Discretion; God so permitting it, for the farther evidencing this great Truth, that we might more easily see on what grounds all this kind of Worship is founded. But now for a Sample or two of Miracles.

We are not to doubt, but as She is the most Glorious, She is also the most Holy, and by consequence, the humblest of all Women. But *Papism* has made Her a very pattern of Pride and Ambition, always aiming at Divine Honours; angry with all that pay them not, severely Punishing those that offend Her, and Rewarding amply all that are peculiarly devoted to Her, and working Miracles perpetually, for nothing but to acquire Adoration, and Honour to Her self. To establish this Adoration, they have made such a Romance
of

of the Blessed Virgin, that no good sober Heathen would have done the like to his *Minerva* or *Diana*, Goddesses of Chastity.

For Example. What more could any Servant of *Venus* or of *Flora*, Goddesses of Prostitution, say of their Deities, than has been said of *Mary*, when they make her marry St. *Dominick*. This Saint was in a Cavern, where he was doing Penances, alas ! for the *Albigenses* of *Tholouse*, covered with gore and wounds of his own inflicting. To him the Virgin appeared, accompanied with three Women, each of them being attended with fifty other Women ; these were (Oh horror to relate !) this three Persons of the Holy Trinity, that made up the Nuptial Equipage and Pomp, when the Virgin was to marry *Dominick* ; and coming to him, *Dominick* (said she) *my Son, my dear Husband, because thou hast valiantly fought against the Enemies of the Faith, lo I am come to succour thee, I, (I say) whom thou so oft has call'd upon.* Then the three Queens that accompanied her, lift up St. *Dominick* from the ground, where he lay half dead, and the Virgin received him into her embraces, kissing him lovingly and tenderly, and withal opened her breasts and let him suck, till he was perfectly recovered. In what a hot and furious imagination was the impudent Monk, think you, when he wrote these horrible things ? Came he not reeking from his damn'd debauches, to commit these foul impurities to paper ? I appeal to all Persons in the *Roman* Communion, of pious Minds and chaste Thoughts, nay, to all the Adorers of the Blessed Virgin, that have any sense of Vertue, any touch of shame, to all such I appeal for my just indignation against this. *Alanus de Rupibus*, (for he it is that reports these things, and that writes of the like abominable intercourse betwixt the Virgin and

Alanus redi-
vivi p.2.6.3.

Idem ibid.
part 2. c. 4.

and himself says, he was usually tempted of the Devil, once in every seven years, and in one of these fits, he had like to have cut his own Throat for despair; but at Mid-night the Virgin came into his Cell, and after a great deal of discourse, drew out her Breasts, and milk'd them on the wounds the Devil had made, and cured them perfectly. Afterwards she married her Servant in the presence of Jesus Christ, and a great many Saints there present, giving him her Virgin Ring, made of her Virgin-hair. After this, she put about his neck a Chain or String, made likewise of her hair, with a hundred and fifty Precious-stones, according to the number of Beads in the Virgins *Psalter* or *Chaplet*. After, she gave him a sweet Kiss, and let him suck her Virgin-Breasts, which he doing very greedily, seemed to have all his Body bedewed with a sweet Liquor; and this favour, he says, she afforded him frequently. Another Story tells us, that one *Eustochium* a Religious Nun, having begg'd of the Virgin to see the Child Jesus, she found him laid upon the straw, where she fell to kissing and embracing him so ardently, that she thought she should have died for pleasure, on the place. Another young Maid, about Fourteen, a devout Servant of the Virgins, having ask'd the same thing, *Mary* gave him into her arms, who embrac'd, caress'd and kiss'd him with such violent transports of love, that her very heart was cleft asunder. Fair warning, one would think, to young Maids!

Has either *Alcoran*, or *Jewish Talmud*, Stories so lewd and so abominable as these? Yet these are the Authors, whose Authority *F. Crasset* has within these six last years, renewed and re-established in his Book! But what is the design of these tales? Why, 'tis to establish the Worship of the Blessed Virgin; for St. *Dominick* had never

ver

ver been her Husband, but that he invented the *Rosary*,
 otherwise call'd the *Virgins Psalter*, compos'd of a hun-
 dred and fifty Beads, of which there are fifteen *Pater*
Nosters for God, (and well they can spare them too,) and
 and one hundred thirty five *Ave Maria's* for the Virgin.
 And for the same reason was our Friend *Alan* favoured,
 because the *Rosary*-way of Worship beginning to decay,
 he did what in him lay to revive it. And for the two
 Virgins obtaining the favour to Kiss Jesus Christ in the
 Flesh, even to Swooning away, why was it, but because
 they were devoted to the Service of the Virgin in a more
 peculiar manner? Now, that you may not think these
 fearful Examples are but few in number, you must know
 there are abundance of them in all the Authors that *F. Cras-*
set quotes and admires. *Hautin*, a Jesuit like himself, re-
 ports a History from *Surius*, of the Marriage of the Vir-
 gin *Mary* with one *Herman*, surnamed *Joseph*, (because
 they were both of them married to the Virgin,) to whom
 the Virgin came, accompanied with two Angels, one
 of which began to speak and say, *To whom shall we marry*
this Young Man? To *Mary*, replied the other, at which
 they commanded *Herman* to draw near: Poor *Herman*
 knew not what in the earth to do; Love prick'd him
 on, and Shame-fac'dness pull'd him back; for though
 before-times he had had particular intimacy with the
 Blessed Virgin, yet he could never hope to see himself
 advanc'd to such a degree, as to be married to Her.
Cæsarius also, whom *F. Crasset* quotes as a very sincere
 Author, relates the Story of a Soldier that fell in love
 with his Captain's Wife, and following the advice of a
 good Hermit, saluted the Virgin a hundred times a
 day, who to recompence this civility, offered herself to
 him like an exceeding handsome Woman, saying, *I will*
be thy Wife, come kiss me, and forc'd him to it. In the
 same

Hautin An-
 gelus Custos
 c. 4. numb. 3.

Cæsarius l. 7.
 c. 13, 18, 32,
 52.

The Life and Death

same Author, we find the Virgin *Mary* kissing and embracing Monks very liberally ; Some she watches over whilst they sleep : others she wipes the face of, whilst they sleep, with her Handkerchief. And had I not reason to say the Chronicles of *Diana* and *Minerva* were more chastly deliver'd down, than those of the ever Blessed Mother of our Lord ?

After these favours, it would be vain to produce any more, or others ; but you may be assured there is no sort or kind, with which the *Devoto's* to the Virgin have not some time or other been graced. She has kept them in their Sicknesses ; She has given them their Sight ; She has delivered them from extreme dangers both by Sea and Land, from Thieves, from Fire, from the Gibbet, from Prisons, and from Death itself ; for many have been raised from the dead, only because they or their Parents have been religious Worshippers of the Blessed Virgin. Read but *Chronicon S. V. Deiparae*, where you shall find a thousand Instances. If one should collect together all the deliverances God hath wrought from the beginning of the World, to this day, they would not make a History to compare with those wrought by our Lady of *Loretto*, *Mont Serrat*, *Liesse*, *Hall*, *Moyenpont*, *Aspremont*, *Ardiliers*, and a hundred more, and all to persuade Us, that the Virgin is mightily pleased to see Herself adored, and that she is at a stand sometimes to find out what Favours to bestow on her peculiar Servants.

But that which is most abominable, is, that these Fables would persuade Us, that the Service of the Virgin is of greater benefit to Us, than that of God ; and that, provided a Man dedicate himself to Her Service, let him be otherwise never so wicked a Villain, yet he need not despair of his Salvation. It was one of these
prophane

profane Visions St. *Brigit* pretended to have had, and which *F. Crasset* hath mustered up afresh, to the intent you should not think those Opinions were at all altered since those days, 1370. Sinners (says he) *being her Subjects, make up her Crown and Glory, and 'tis for that she loves them, with the tendernefs and sweet compassion of a Mother, let them be never so wicked, as a Mother pittieeth her Children, though they have lost their senses, and are become mad ; and this is what she has revealed to St. Brigit.* *Know Thou* (quoth the Mother to the Daughter) *my dearest Child, that there is no Man in the World so lewd and curs'd of God, that is entirely forsaken of him whilst he lives ; no Sinner so desperate, but may return, and find mercy with him, provided he have recourse to Me.* St. *Bonaventure* is of the same mind, and expressees himself in these comfortable words : *O Mary, be a Man never so miserable a Sinner, you have the soft compassions of a Mother for him ; you embrace him, and hug him close in your bosom, and never will forsake him, till you have reconcil'd him to his formidable Judge.*

Part 1. tr. 1.
qu. 10. p. 77.

Brig. Revel.
book 6. c. 10.

'Tis with design of persuading us to believe these comfortable Truths, that *F. Crasset* musters up a whole Chapter of Examples of the wickedest Men that possibly can be, that yet have been saved, by preserving their devotion for the Blessed Virgin, amidst all their impieties, entire. Such a one is that of *Theophilus of Adanus*, a City of *Cilicia*, who having been depos'd of his Arch-deaconry, for no great good, gave himself over to the Devil, for spite and anger, by the help and means of a Jewish Magician whom he served. He renounced *Mary* and her Son, and gave the Devil a Scroll signed with his own Hand ; after which he became intolerably desperate and mad for what he had done : But in these Agonies of Mind and Soul, a glimpse or ray of hope appeared

ubi supra.
pag. 86.

Pag. 90.
part 1.

to him, that Blessed *Mary* could deliver him from this evil, and straightways thereupon he goes to her Church, and prostrates himself before her Image: Which failed him not at this time of need, but reconciled him to God, and forced the Devil to give him back his Bonds again.

To this, F. *Crasset* thinks fit to add such another, taken from *Casarius*; of a young *Gascoign* Soldier, who after he had wasted all he had in the World, gave himself up to *Satan*, and renounced *Jesus Christ*; but do whatever the Devil could, he could not be brought to renounce his Mother, and this obtained his Pardon for that horrible Crime; down he threw himself before the Image of the Virgin *Mary*, which had the Image of *Jesus* in her arms, and heard this Dialogue between them. The Virgins Image said, *O my sweet Son, have mercy on this Man*: The Son's Image answered, *Why Mother, what would you have me do with this Wretch, that hath renounced Me?* After this, the young Man saw the Blessed Virgin (that is to say, her Image) prostrate herself to little *Jesus*, and demand again his Pardon, whom *Jesus* lovingly took up, (and 'twas very much for a Child of his bigness,) and said to her, *I never yet refused my Mother any thing she ask'd; I grant it for your sake, and yours alone.* Would one believe, that a Jesuit should have the confidence to furbish up such ridiculous things as these, at this time of day, in such an Age as ours? I had often heard this Story told by Protestants, to shame the Papists; but I never thought it would have been produced at this time, by a Renowned Jesuit, in honour of their Religion, and that too in *Paris*, the most frequented City in the whole World. But to put you past all doubting of this Truth, F. *Crasset* tells us, that *Casarius* says, that this very *Gascoign* was alive in his time, 1222. and that nothing was more sure, nor better attested, than this famous

Story.

Story. And for the credit of *Casarius*, the same good Father tells us, he was of the Order of *Cistercians*, and lived above four hundred years ago, and was, as *Trithemius* the Abbot tells us, a very Learned, and a very Pag. 105. Honest Man, and one that stuck to his rule very close. You may judge (says he) of the sincerity and credit of this Man, by what he says in his Preface to his own Works, *God is my Witness* (cries he) *that I am not the Inventor of any thing I have reported in my Dialogues.* And who alive can help believing him, after this Protestation? Therefore take, in short, another Story of *Casarius's* telling, of one *Beatrix* a Servant in a Convent, who being debauch'd by a Priest, got out of the Convent, and lived in a Bawdy-house fifteen years, during all which time, the Virgin *Mary* took her shape, and constantly supplied her place; so that no body perceiv'd her absence, and her Reputation suffered nothing all the while; and all this, because she had, as she was going out, prayed to the Virgin, and (giving her the Keys of the Convent into her hand) had said, *Madam, I have served you as devoutly* Casarius l. 7. *as I possibly could; I give you here your Keys again, and am* c. 35. *able no longer to withstand the temptations of the Flesh.* This tends to the same end with all the rest, namely, to let you understand, that, break God's Commands, or do Crass. p. 90. whatever you please, serve but the Blessed Virgin, and all is well.

Pelbart of Temeswar, another of F. Crasser's great Au- Stell. Coronæ. thors, tells us, there was a certain Woman that plaid l. 12. c. 3. the Whore with a Neighbor's Husband of hers, whose Wife finding his roguery out, pray'd to the Virgin to confound that wicked Creature that had debauch'd her Husband from her Bed; but it was found, that this impudent Harlot had still the grace, every day, to say seven *Ave Maria's*, and therefore the Virgins Image answered

the complaining Wife, and said, *She of whom thou speakest, offers me Praises that are very agreeable to me, and whilst she does so, I assure you Mistress I can never hurt her, but on the contrary, will preserve her from disgrace; however I promise you, I'll see and convert her.* And this is the way to Profelyte to the Virgin, those who trample God's Commandments under foot.

Craffet. p.94.

If you would have any more Stories, to prove that the Worlhip of the Virgin separate from that of God, is a sure way to Salvation, you may find them, in great plenty, in Father *Craffet*. There you may see the Virgin keeping them, that keep not God's Commands; and how a Bird having learn'd to cry *Ave Maria*, and being seized on by a Hawk, scream'd out but *Ave Maria*, and the ravenous Hawk immediately left her. And likewise, how the Devil, being in the Air, and spying a Christian that was not upon his guard, came swooping down upon him, like a Bird of Prey; but as soon as he heard him pronounce, and devoutly call upon the Name of *Mary*, he was fain to pull in his horns (I meant his talons) and be gone. There you shall see her taking a great deal of pains to raise from the dead, Rogues that had liv'd in nothing else but wickedness, & died without repentance; only to give them leisure to Confess, and do some trifling Penances, and then again depart in peace. It is the same Father *Craffet*, that tells from *Surius*, the History of a Citizen of *Rome*, called *Andrew*, so insufferably debauch'd, that he bore no token or mark of Christianity upon him, but that he was an Admirer of *St. Casarion* Martyr: As *Andrew* lived, so he died like a Reprobate, without any tokens of Repentance; but at the Intercession of *Mary* and *Casarion*, he arose from the dead to Confess, and do Penance, and returned from whence he came.

Pelbars

Pelbart of *Temeswar* (that never sticks at any thing) tells us of a Robber on the High-way, (that used nevertheless to Fast every *Saturday* in Honour to the Virgin) who at last being caught in the Fact, was Beheaded on the spot; his Head in falling from his Body, cried out thrice, *Confession, Confession, Confession*, upon which they fetch'd a Priest, who came and set his Head again upon his Shoulders, to whom the Thief reported, that as soon as his Head was cut off, the Devils had seized on his Soul to drag it into Hell, but that the Virgin hindred them, not permitting the Soul and Body quite to separate, till he was Confess'd; and that he had obtained this Grace, for Fasting every *Saturday* to her Honour: And this serves to support two Articles of Popery, the Invocation of the Virgin, and the necessity of Confession. But if we will not believe *Pelbart*, nor Father *Crasset*, neither will we Hereticks be persuaded, that a Rogue rose from the dead.

In the same place, you read how that the Soul of a Soldier kill'd in Fight, in the Service of the Emperor *Sigismund*, continued in his Body many years after the Flesh was rotten and worn off. The Blessed Virgin not permitting the Soul to part before Confession, because he had been all his Life-time Her peculiar Servant. Another Miracle there is, of which *Pelbart* himself was an Eye-witness. A certain wicked Villain fell into the *Danube*, and was under water three days, where he heard a Voice say to him, Thou deservest well, O Wretch, to lose thy Life, and be Condemn'd for ever for thy Sins, but because thou art a Servant to the Virgin *Mary*, thou shalt be delivered from this danger, that thou may'st go and be Confessed; and up he came, though he could not Swim a stroke, and came and Confess'd to *Pelbart* himself, who tells you this Story. *'Twas from*

Page 135.

from the Man his own self (says Father Crasset) that this Religious Pelbart heard this History; and you must either believe this Penitent was an Impostor and Cheat, (and I pray take heed of wronging such a Pickled Youth) or else that Pelbart was a wicked Man, and took delight to impose upon the belief of the sovereign High Priest of Rome, (to whom he dedicated his Works) and all the Faithful. Or else you must believe this Story for a certain truth, and consequently that the Virgin does preserve sometimes her Servants from everlasting Damnation, after Death. And in the same Page, this worthy Jesuit says, That *Casarius* the *Cistercian*, that lived about 400. years since, and made 12. Books of Dialogues upon Miracles and Apparitions in his time, sets down many Examples of this nature; how Dead men were saved from Damnation by the Virgins means, obtaining Grace for them, to return to Life again to do some Penance.

If I would drain those Springs (as Father Crasset does) of Pelbart, *Casarius*, *Bernardin de Bustis*, *Vincen-tius Bellovicensis*, *St. Antonine of Florence*, and the rest, I could make a monstrous great Volume of these Fables, that tend to the establishing the necessity of Worshipping the Blessed Virgin, but this small number drawn from Father Crasset, is as good as if I had heaped up all together, with a great deal of Pains and Trouble.

For by this, we Protestants may see, how far we are to trust those *Catholick Doctors*, who would have us believe, their Service and Religion has for many years last past, been cleansed and purified from all these vain and idle Popular Superstitions. When Father Crasset, a famous Jesuit, (though Monsieur *Arnaud* call him the *Wretched Jesuit Crasset*). A Jesuit, I say, in the City of *Paris*, where Popery is most refin'd; in the Face of Monsieur, the Bishop of *Meaux*, and other Catholics, averse

averse from the vulgar Superstitions. When he, I say again, renews and revives these Silly and Impertinent Fables, with the approbation of his Society, his Archbishop, and his King. And if the great Man at Rome, should in a good Humour, think fit to say, this Book of Father Crasset, is compos'd with *so much Learning, in such a Method, and with such a Discretion, as is proper to instruct the Readers clearly in few words, and to extort even from the unwilling (such as Monsieur de Meaux, and Monsieur Arnaud) a confession of the Catholick Faith.* (In this point) If he, I say, should but say thus much, I would fain know why it would not be as Authentick a Book, as the *Catholick Exposition of Monsieur de Condom.* And are we (in good earnest) secure, it never will be so? Will a better Friend to the Jesuits, never possess that Chair? And if there do, may he not do as much for such a Book as this of Father Crasset's, as the present Pope has done for *Monsieur de Meaux's*? And must the Faith of Christ be at such uncertainties? This surely is not building on a Rock, but on the Sand, that every Wave can wash away at pleasure. For if every Pope can make an Exposition of the Catholick Faith, Authentical, (And if every one cannot, how can any one?) I do not see but we may have as many several Faiths, as there are Casualties and Diseases in the Weekly Bill.

Of Louis le
Grand.

THE END.

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